



FAIRLEE NEWSLETTER

April 2022

FROM SELECTBOARD CHAIR PETER BERGER

As we close the first quarter of 2022, shake off winter and begin to see signs of spring, we miss the in-person Town Meeting conversations. Yet, even without an in-person meeting, we are grateful and proud that the Town Budget was overwhelmingly approved.

As the year progresses, you will see visible change because of the budget approval, especially on our roads and with the construction of valuable and needed infrastructure. The budget will be enhanced as we continue to apply for and earn grant money from state and federal sources.

We are delighted to welcome **Lance Mills** to a full term on the Selectboard. He has already shared a wealth of local history and knowledge.

A WORD FROM LANCE MILLS

After many years of community involvement coaching Fairlee's sports teams, serving on the cemetery committee, and various other community service activities, it seemed natural for me to seek a seat on the Selectboard.

My first year has shown me how hard our town employees work to get things done for the Town of Fairlee, and I really appreciate them. There's a sense of responsibility that comes with a seat on the Selectboard. I used to dodge potholes in the Spring and think, "Someone needs to fix those." Now I dodge potholes in the Spring and think, "we" need to fix those.

I am really looking forward to working with my board colleagues to get things done for the townsfolk of Fairlee over the next three years. **There's so much we can accomplish.** This is an exciting time to live in Fairlee!

TOWN MEETING SUMMARY

While virtual turnout for the information session on February 24 was low, the budget voting turnout on Town Meeting Day was stellar, fueled by the ease of mail-in ballots. Fairlee's voter check list is 762. Two hundred and sixty-five or 35% took part in Town Meeting voting and 248 (94%) were mail-in ballots—respectable participation that honors the responsibility and community spirit displayed by most Fairlee residents. Thank you.

Thank you as well for supporting the general fund, highway, and capital budgets.

- For the general fund, the vote was 183 (69%) in favor, 75 (28%) against, and 8 (3%) blank.
- For the highway budget, the vote was 206 (78%) in favor, 46 (17%) against, and 14 (5%) blank.
- For the capital budget, the vote was 193 (73%) in favor, 65 (25%) against, and 7 (3%) blank.

Lance Mills was elected to his first full term as a Selectboard member, and then elected Vice Chair at the Selectboard's organizing meeting on March 7. (Peter Berger was re-elected as Chair.)

A variety of elected positions remain open, including:

- Auditor three years
- Budget Committee three years
- Rec Council (2) for two years
- Rec Council for three years

If you are interested in assuming one of these positions, please contact Georgette Wolf-Ludwig at townclerk@fairleevt.org.

ACROSS THE FINISH LINE!

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Fairlee has completed the water infrastructure work that was approved in a bond vote in 2017.



- There is a new water tank off Bald Top Road.
- A filtration system has been added at the well.
- New pipes have been installed on Route 5, Fairview Street, and parts of Lake Morey Road.
- Water meters have been installed in every unit that accesses Fairlee water.

With the help of Resources for Communities and People (RCAP), the Water Commissioners will institute water fees by the end of 2022 that are based on a new model that measures and bills for each unit's usage. Special thanks to Water Operators Lance Colby and Barry Larson for their diligence.

In conjunction with Clean Water Vermont, Water Department Treasurer Lisa Hinsley and Town Administrator Tad Nunez have instituted an Asset Management program funded with a \$50,000 forgivable loan. The Asset Management program facilitates management of the water infrastructure and will help the Town avoid costly shutdowns and emergency repairs.



INVESTING IN A HEALTHY LAKE MOREY

Last August, due to rising concerns about the health of Lake Morey and how it might be affected by development, the Selectboard set a construction moratorium on lakefront properties.

To understand the impact of development and alongside Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Lake Morey Commission and Lake Morey Protective Association (LMPA) research, the Town engaged two UVM undergraduate interns, Carly Valko and Eliza Frankenthaler, who have collated recent information about Lake Morey, interviewed key stakeholders, and drafted a survey that will gather information about lakefront septic. The outcome of the project will be an omnibus of data that will allow the Selectboard to decide whether to cease or continue the lake construction moratorium.

LIBRARY ENHANCEMENT

A special library enhancement committee including Beth Reynolds, Charlotte Williams, Steve Carstens, Ginny Reed and Jen Johnson is working on plans for a renovation/expansion of the Fairlee Public Library. This project will provide a new space for individual private use, such as Telehealth. Space is also planned for small public meetings and for additional books and storage. The work will be funded through a variety of sources, including grants and charitable gifts. For more information, email Beth Reynolds at fairlee.library@gmail.com.

ARTWORK I-91 UNDERPASS

Fairlee Community Arts (FCA) won a \$15,000 Animating Infrastructure grant from Vermont Arts Council (VAC) to fund a mural in the I-91 underpass. After gathering community feedback, an FCA committee selected artist Matt Heywood of Middlebury, VT.



With Fairlee residents and visitors, Matt will create a pair of layered, low-relief murals that flow across the bridge abutment walls to welcome pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. The artwork features large-scale, cutouts of iconic native trees, and celebrates the colorful change of seasons in Vermont. Two figures harmonize with the foliage to symbolize our vital connections with the natural world.



FCA is busy planning public events and activities for community members to help make the art! To learn more and get involved, contact Miranda Clemson at mclemson@fairleearts.org.

KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED: CROSSWALK AND SIDEWALKS!

Fairlee has applied for a state grant that would fund a gravel sidewalk on the east side of the Fairlee Common and two crosswalks that would safely connect the Common to Chapman’s Place and to Gray’s Electric (and the Railroad Station). The plan has been approved by VTtrans; grant recipients will be announced by the end of July.

COMMUNITY SEPTIC

Research indicates that shared community septic would facilitate workforce housing and attract new businesses to Fairlee’s village center. A study that is at no expense to the Town is gathering input from businesses and residents about their interest in community septic. We thank all those who have taken part in the Dufresne survey.

ARPA WORKSHOP

Fairlee has been awarded \$292,947 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The Selectboard has drafted a short list of areas in which the Town can use the funds, including stormwater abatement, cyber security, community septic, a backup well, and village livability. There will be a **public (live and virtual) session on May 18 at 7:00 PM** to describe the ways that the funds can be used, solicit recommendations from the community, and test the Selectboard’s short list.

FRANK J. BARRETT MEMORIAL LECTURE

Bill Fitzhugh, curator of North American archaeology at the Smithsonian and a Bald Top Road resident, will present his findings from an archeological dig at a homestead foundation in the Town Forest at the Frank J. Barrett, Jr. Memorial Lecture, hosted by the Fairlee Historical Society, on **Wednesday, June 15 at 6:30** in the Town Hall auditorium.

MAKE OUR TOWN SHINE!

Green Up Day is Saturday, May 7th. Your help makes a huge difference in keeping our Town clean. Bags are available two weeks before Green Up at the Town Clerk’s Office. Sign up for a route. On Green Up Day, volunteers meet at Fairlee Town Hall at 10 AM. Bags can be dropped off at the Fairlee Town Hall one week prior to or between 10 and 1 on Green Up Day.

Comments or questions?
Peter Berger: peter.berger@fairleevt.org
Lance Mills: lance.mills@fairleevt.org
Cathy McGrath: cathy.mcgrath@fairleevt.org
Tad Nunez: townadministrator@fairleevt.org